

trained themselves into a formidable
 efficiency Contact
 with one another preserved and
 strengthened, in all of
 them, a saving sense of humour They were
 not out to
 frighten, but to convert, they presented their
 novel notion
 in a form the more insinuating that it was
 not, and was
 not meant to be, alarming They were not
 dreary Propa-
 ganda they found and made tremendous fun
 Outstanding
 among them was a quartette—George
 Bernard Shaw,
 Sidney Webb, Sydney Olivier and Graham
 Wallas Shaw
 was first on the field He had come from
 Ireland to London
 in the late 'seventies, his professional
 occupation at the
 time being that of musical and dramatic
 critic, although
 his shabby portmanteau was bulging with
 MSS plays
 and novels He it is who has, also, written, m
 various
 forms, most of the history of these bright early
 days and
 drawn the most vivid picture of the man whom
 he always
 regarded as the master-mind in the group,
 who was to
 be his closest friend and associate for the next
 half century
 —Sidney Webb Sidney Webb he first saw in
 action,
 in 1879, when barely twenty
 Shaw joined, among other groups of the
 kind, a body
 which called itself by the resounding name of
 the Zetetical
 Society This was a sort of junior offshoot of
 the then
 famous Hampstead Dialectical Society—a club
 for the
 discussion of political and social questions,
 and Shaw,
 at any rate, joined it for the purpose of
 learning to speak
 There, a few weeks later, an individual took
 part in one

of the debates who roused his keenest interest.
Fortunately,
he has described him

"The speaker was a young man of about twenty-one, rather below middle height, with small pretty hands and feet, and a profile that suggested, on account of the nose and imperial, an improvement upon Napoleon the Third. He had a fine forehead, a long head, eyes that were built on top of two highly developed organs of speech (according to the phrenologists) and remark-